



# ***NewsMAC***

**Newsletter of the New Mexico Archeological Council**

**P.O. Box 25691**

**Albuquerque, NM 87125**

## ***NewsMAC Spring 2024*** **(2024-1)**

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**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

Greetings everyone!

I hope you are all having a wonderful start to the new year! I am excited to be your president for 2024 with a goal to have a productive year for the New Mexico Archeological Council (NMAC). NMAC held a successful and informative Annual Meeting last fall highlighting archaeology on federal land. The planning for the 2024 Annual Meeting is already underway and more details will be provided soon, so stay tuned. The NMAC 2024 Annual Meeting will be November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Hibben Center, University of New Mexico.

The NMAC Executive Committee met in early March for our first quarterly meeting of 2024. We have several new volunteers who have stepped up this year to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee, including President-Elect Evan Giomi and Secretary Alissa Healy. Natalie Frodsham has become the Webmaster and has already worked hard to update our website and make it secure. Please all go check out the updated website (<https://nmarchcouncil.org/>). Robin Cordero is now co-chairing the Workshop Committee. A full list of NMAC officers and committee chairs who are serving this year is provided on page 13 of this newsletter.

NMAC is in the planning stages of creating several workshops in coordination with agencies aimed at educating professionals across New Mexico. This includes workshops on various topics focused on analysis and field trips to specific sites to foster skills in archaeology and historic preservation. More information will be coming on these exciting topics. If members or non-members have any topics they would like to see addressed in future workshops, please contact the Workshop Committee or the Executive Committee.

As usual, NMAC will award up to \$3,000 in grants this year to successful applicants. The 2024 Research Grant cycle is now open, and submissions are due before or on **April 15, 2024**. Please refer to the website (<https://nmarchcouncil.org/events/grants-program/>) for more information and contact the Grants Committee Chair ([pleckman@srcrm.com](mailto:pleckman@srcrm.com)) with questions or submittals.

Thank you all for your continued participation and support of NMAC! I look forward to meeting you all at upcoming archaeology events and the annual meeting in the fall.

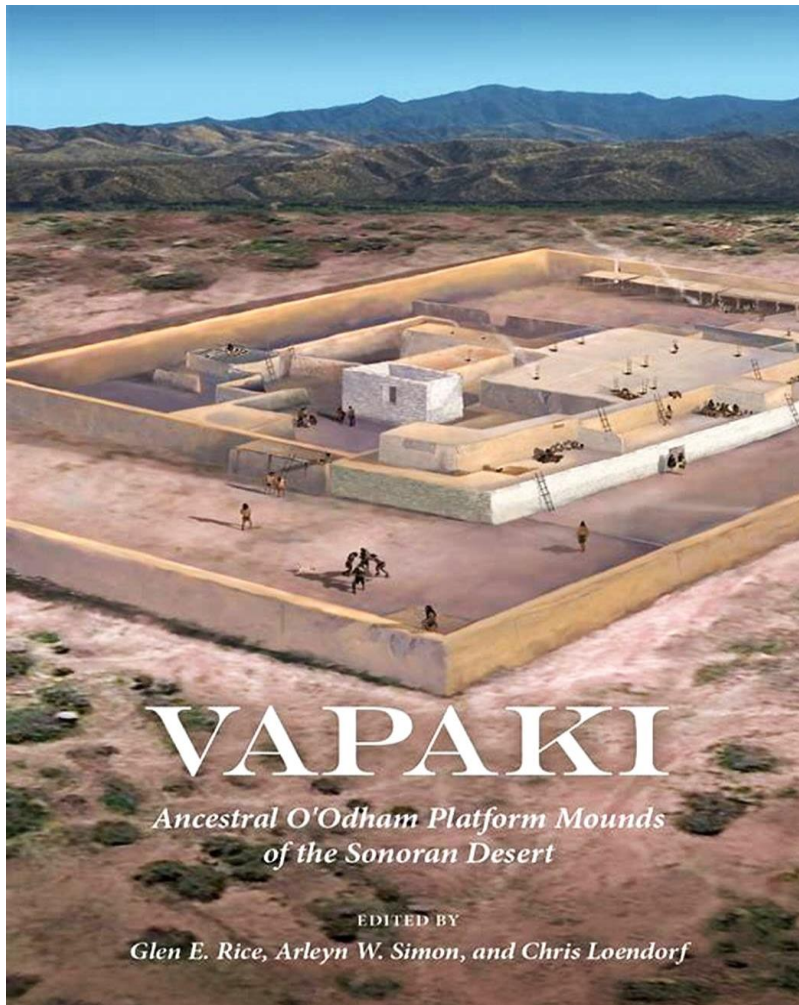
Sincerely,

Heather Seltzer-Rogers, 2024 NMAC President  
[hseltzer@chronicleheritage.com](mailto:hseltzer@chronicleheritage.com)

**REVIEW of *Vapaki: Ancestral O’Odham Platform Mounds of the Sonoran Desert***, edited by Glen E. Rice, Arleyn W. Simon, and Chris Loendorf. 2023.

**By Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers**

University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City. xx+305 pp., bibliography, index. \$84.00 hardcover (ISBN 9781647691172), \$64.00 e-Book (ISBN 9781647691196).



Of the three primary archaeological cultures of the ancient American Southwest/Mexican Northwest (commonly termed Ancestral Pueblo, Hohokam, and Mogollon), the “Hohokam” (hereafter Ancestral O’Odham) stands out for its seeming absence from “Hohokam”-centered major press publications over the past twenty-five years, with a few major exceptions by Abbott (2000, 2003) and Hill (2019). This work, *Vapaki: Ancestral O’Odham Platform Mounds of the Southern Desert*, provides an outstanding synthesis and detailed investigation of what archaeologists have learned from over seventy-five years of excavations in platform mound communities in southern Arizona and ethnographic documentation and, more recently, collaboration with the Akimel O’Odham and Tohono O’odham.

Leading this book is a preface by Chris Loendorf and Barnaby Lewis (THPO, Gila River Indian Community) that presents Lewis' understanding of platform mound communities based on traditional Akimel O'Odham oral histories and their significance to O'Odham (and other) descendant communities, including that the proper Akimel O'Odham spelling for these structures is *vapaki*<sup>1</sup>, not the occasionally used *vahki/vahkis* and that the inhabitants and rulers (*sisivan*) of the platform mounds are the same ethnicity/heritage as those who overthrew them. The first chapter ("Platform Mounds of the Sonoran Desert") by Glen Rice, Arleyn Simon, Chris Loendorf, Carla Van West, and Jeffrey Dean is an introduction to what *vapaki* are, their distribution, a brief entry into life in such a community, an entry into O'Odham oral narratives that incorporate *vapaki*, and an introduction to the volume and the primary research questions investigated.

The second through fifth chapters compose the second part ("A Context for the Study of Platform Mounds"). The second chapter ("Platform Mounds and Ethnographic Analogy Revisited: Defining the Functional Universe") by Mark Elson expands on his widely cited 1998 cross-cultural investigation of mounded structures. The third chapter ("West Mexican Connections and Classic Period Hohokam Platform Mounds") by Suzanne Fish and Paul Fish provide a much-needed assessment of shared attributes and proposed connections between West Mexico and the late prehispanic Ancestral O'Odham, arguing against presumptions of declining connection after the Preclassic period, and providing a highly accessible entry into West Mexico archaeology for a Southwestern audience. The fourth chapter ("Contextualizing Platform Mounds") by Carla Van West and Jeffrey Dean pushes southern Arizona archaeologists to expand their scale of analysis to include the northern American Southwest and northwest Mexico as well as paleoclimatic reconstruction, as is commonplace in discussions of the late thirteenth century Four Corners area. The final chapter in the second part ("Akimel O'Odham Traditional Knowledge Regarding Platform Mounds") by Linda Morgan, Barnaby Lewis, and Chris Loendorf presents O'Odham traditional knowledge, *vahki* place and *sivan* names, and ties them together with the O'Odham Creation Story and Oriole Bird Songs with the archaeological record along the Middle Gila River valley to demonstrate retention of archaeologically supported events in descendant communities and the need for non-O'Odham to engage with such communities and their rich oral narratives.

The third part ("Development of Platform Mounds") is composed of three chapters. The sixth chapter ("The Gatlin Site Platform Mound") by David Doyel provides the most detailed investigation in the volume of the construction of a single platform mound community, that being the early, elaborate, and unusually large and constructed one at the Gatlin Site near Gila Bend. The seventh chapter ("What We Know and What We Wished We Knew about Hohokam Platform Mounds") by David Abbott brings to bear his expertise on the Ancestral O'Odham to assess our current understanding of platform mound communities and, more importantly, the significance of their expansion, both in size and spatial distribution. The eighth chapter ("When is a Platform Mound: A Focus on Diversity and Function") by Richard Ciolek-Torello assesses the diversity of platform mounds based on function, suggesting there are three (plus one, tower) types—ceremonial mounds, elite residential mounds, and nucleated residential mounds that he also terms Pueblos. The implication is that, despite the widespread distribution of *vapaki* across southern Arizona, archaeologists must assume they do not represent a cohesive ideology or shared pattern of social organization.

The fourth part (“Platform Mounds at a Local Scale”) contains four chapters. The ninth chapter (“Platform Mound Communities along the Middle Gila River”) by M. Kyle Woodson, Chris Loendorf, and Brian Medchill summarizes investigations by the Cultural Resource Management Program of the Gila River Indian Community over the past twenty years to construct explanative patterns for the events of the late twelfth through fourteenth centuries. The tenth chapter (“A Monument for Memory: The Pueblo Grande Platform Mound”) by Todd Bostwick, Douglas Mitchell, Laurene Montero, and Christian Downum focuses on the Pueblo Grande platform mound and summarizes the findings from investigations there. The eleventh chapter (“Social Organization and Leadership Strategies among Tonto Basin Platform Mound Communities”) by Arleyn Simon and Owen Lindauer summarizes the main findings of the major Roosevelt Archaeology Project with respect to changes that occurred with the development and expansion of the Salado religious movement. In the twelfth chapter (“Mounds, Mounding, and Polychrome Pottery: Roosevelt Red Ware and Platform Mounds in the Tonto Basin of Central Arizona”), Katherine Dungan focuses on Roosevelt Red Ware (commonly termed Salado polychrome) production and distribution in platform mound communities in the Tonto Basin.

The fifth (“Platform Mounds on a Regional Scale”) and sixth (“Conclusion”) parts contain three chapters in all. The thirteenth chapter (“Anarchic Social Movements as an Explanation for Rapid Change: A Case Study from the Hohokam World, AD 1200–1450”) by Lewis Borck and Jeffery Clark articulates a contentious view of Salado as an anarchic social movement that sought to remove the established, stratified hierarchy represented by the *sisivan*. Although I strongly disagree with several statements and interpretations presented in the chapter (and other works of theirs), it is an excellent, clear articulation of their view with significant value and demands increased attention by other archaeologists in the area and elsewhere. The fourteenth chapter (“Monuments, Costly Signaling, and Replicative Fitness during the Hohokam Era”) by Glen Rice, Christopher Watkins, Erica O’Neil, and Erik Steinbach adopts a functionalist approach to platform mound studies with respect to costly signaling. In the final chapter by Glen Rice and Chris Loendorf (“Unfinished Work at Platform Mounds”), the authors summarize the key findings of the various chapters, discuss the differing ideas presented in them, and advocate for new research into several topics.

*Vapaki* is a tremendous work that accomplishes three key components. First, it decisively lays out the profound O’Odham ties to the “Hohokam,” such that it would behoove Southwest archaeologists to utilize Ancestral O’Odham in its stead<sup>2</sup> and widely engage with O’Odham oral narratives and O’Odham tribal elders. Second, it is the first in a near dearth of Ancestral O’Odham focused books over the past two-plus decades, providing a new entry into active and influential past scholarship to a new generation of archaeologists. Third, it poses several new areas for investigation in late prehispanic Southwestern sociopolitical complexity, the interpretational contributions to be present in descendant community engagement and suggests competing ideas for just what platform mounds meant to the O’Odham inhabitants of southern Arizona over a half-millennia ago. Two chapters stood out to me, those by Morgan and colleagues and Doyel for their significant contributions to Southwestern archaeology and a detailed treatment of a single, highly unusual, and intriguing site. *Vapaki* is rich in data, references, and ideas and is an absolute necessity for Southwest archaeologists and anthropologists. I found it thoroughly intellectually engaging, insightful, entertaining, and inspiring for what the present and future of Southwestern archaeology can accomplish.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>All spellings throughout this review follow Akimel O’Odham spellings employed in the book, not the commonly published Tohono O’odham versions of the same work (e.g., *sivan* instead of Tohono O’odham *siwan*).

<sup>2</sup>As is widely practiced for the Ancestral Pueblo.

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2003 *Centuries of Decline during the Hohokam Classic Period at Pueblo Grande*. Edited. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Elson, Mark D.

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Hill, J. Brett

2019 *From Huhugam to Hohokam: Heritage and Archaeology in the American Southwest*. Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland.

*Reviewed by Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers, PhD*

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## Archaeological Society of NM Annual 2024 Meeting

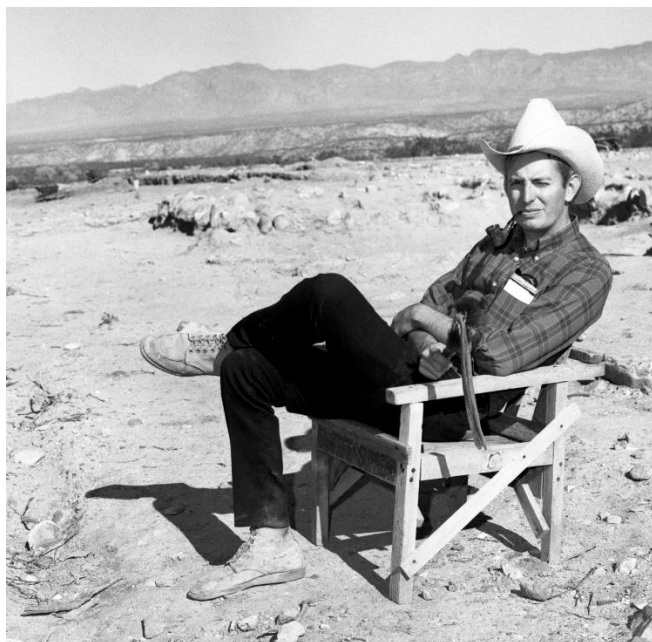
The Archaeological Society of New Mexico’s Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Site Steward Foundation in Las Vegas, New Mexico at the Plaza Hotel on May 3-5, 2024, with the theme “Archaeology of Northeastern New Mexico and Pueblo-Plains Interactions.”

For more details and register information please visit:

<https://archaeologicalsocietynm.org/events/asnm-annual-meeting-2024/>

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## Laurens C. Hammack, 1936–2023



(ASM 26602) Larry Hammack, project director at Second Canyon, AZ BB:11:20 (ASM), 1969. Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. Photographer, Helga Teiwes.



(ASM 43344) Laurens Hammack, Associate Archaeologist, Arizona State Museum, 1976. Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. Photographer, Helga Teiwes.

Laurens C. Hammack, better known as Larry and sometimes as Lorenzo, was born in Chicago in 1936. His father, a part-time film maker, and his mother often visited the Southwest, and his mother was among the first non-Native women to see Rainbow Bridge. When Larry was 12, the family visited his aunt and her husband on their ranch near Datil, New Mexico. His aunt took him out to dig in a rock shelter in a nearby canyon. Larry's discovery of a large polychrome sherd crystallized his intention to become an archaeologist and explore the Southwest.

In 1954 Larry enrolled in the University of New Mexico. The lasting professional friendships begun there included one with Gwinn Vivian. After completing his studies, including a field school session at Pottery Mound, Larry received his B.A. in anthropology in 1959. His first job was as a crew member on the Navajo Reservoir Project, working for Ed Dittert. The following year he got a summer job at Fort Burgwin, working for Fred Wendorf.

While at Fort Burgwin, Larry was drafted into the U.S. Army but, improbably, continued his archaeological career. A 1961 headline in the base newspaper for White Sands Missile Range reads: "Soldier-Archaeologist at WSMR Uncovers Ancient Indian Dwelling" (*Wind & Sand* 1961). The base's commanding officer was interested in archaeology, and tasked Larry with excavating a site on the base (an Antiquities Act permit was obtained) (Hammack 1960). As an SP4, Larry found himself supervising a volunteer crew that included a brigadier general and other officers. During the work, Larry met a local teenager with an interest in archaeology, who later followed Larry into archaeology. That teenager was Mike Marshall, co-author of this obituary.



In 1961 Larry completed his military duty and began working on his master's degree at UNM. In the summers he worked as a salvage archaeologist at the Museum of New Mexico, again for Fred Wendorf (then director of the Laboratory of Anthropology). In the summers of 1962 and 1963 he completed surveys and excavations at the Ute Dam Reservoir near Logan, New Mexico (Hammack 1965). This work became the basis for his master's thesis. During this time, working for Florence Hawley Ellis, Larry led the field effort to recover artifacts from a previously undiscovered chamber in Feather Cave, near Capitan (Ellis and Hammack 1968). As a teaching assistant, Larry met a talented freshman, Nancy Stopper, who was to become his wife, colleague, and business partner. When the two wed in 1964, Larry's best man was Mike Marshall.

Once Larry obtained his master's degree, in 1964, he continued working for the Laboratory of Anthropology, now directing salvage projects. In 1966 the Arizona State Museum poached Larry from the Lab, hiring him to replace Gwinn Vivian as Highway Salvage Archaeologist (Thompson 2004). Larry continued in this role until 1979, when he and Nancy acknowledged the shift from salvage archaeology to CRM and founded Complete Archaeological Services Associates or CASA. At first they were based in Oracle, Arizona but in 1981 they moved CASA to Cortez, Colorado. After retiring, Larry and Nancy moved to Santa Fe.

Given an active field career that spanned decades, it's not surprising that Larry racked up a number of archaeological reports. Given the funding constraints that came with salvage archaeology, many of those reports were brief, but the work created collections that others would study in more detail (e.g., Franklin 1978). The publications list provided below emphasizes studies in New Mexico. Larry will be remembered by his friends as someone who devoted his life to archaeological fieldwork in the Southwest, who had a lot of fun doing that work, who often served as a mentor, and who shared his *joie de vivre* with all around him.

**Notes.** A similar obituary, more focused on Larry's career in Arizona, will appear in *Glyphs*. The selected bibliography is based in part on a list generated by Allison Colborne, Director of the Laboratory of Anthropology Library.

By David A. Phillips, Jr.,  
Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131

And  
Michael P. Marshall, Cibola Research Consultants, P.O. Box 743, Corrales, NM 87048

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Thompson, Raymond H.

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*Wind & Sand*

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## NMAC 2023 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

The New Mexico Archeological Council put on another informative and social Annual Meeting in November 2023. The meeting was organized by 2022 NMAC President Christina Chavez and focused on innovative research and management of cultural resources of federal lands. On Friday night, the meeting kicked off with a wonderful Keynote Address by Dr. Dave Rachal about research on dating the Pleistocene footprints in the Tularosa Basin. To learn more about Dr. Rachal's research, please go find his 2024 co-authored article in the journal *Quaternary Research* entitled *The Pleistocene Footprints are Younger Than We Thought: Correcting the Radiocarbon Dates of Puppia seeds, Tularosa Basin, New Mexico*.

As always, the NMAC Executive Board presented annual awards during the meeting, and this year's awards went to two very deserving scholars committed to archaeological research in New Mexico. Dr. Joan Mathien received the 2023 NMAC Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her sustained commitment to archaeological research in New Mexico while in federal service. While Paul F. Reed received the Schuyler Award in recognition of his leadership in synthesizing and publishing the work conducted at Salmon Ruins in the 1970s.

As a pleasant surprise, the presentations at the meeting had an emphasis on the archaeology of southern New Mexico, including presentations on Mogollon and Mimbres archaeology. Following the formal presentations, the audience was treated to an engaging afternoon panel discussion where representatives of five federal agencies compared cultural resources management on their agency's lands. The conference was rounded out by an enjoyable happy hour after the official meeting program ended. In all, over 100 people participated in the meeting either in-person or online and we hope that if you haven't given the NMAC Annual Meeting a try in a few years that you will join us for the 2024 Annual Meeting on November 9th. We look forward to seeing you there!

-Michael Spears, NMAC President, 2023



NMAC 2023 Annual Conference (from left to right): Christina Chavez, Wendy Sutton, David Reynolds, Cynthia Herhahn, Jamie Civitello. Credit Michael Spears.

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\$\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of publication #6 ***The Archaeological Record of Southern New Mexico***, rev 2001. NM HPD. Contributors: Steve Lekson-Southwest; Human Systems Research-South Central; Susana R. and Paul Katz- Southeast @ \$25 per copy + \$5 s/h

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NMAC's goals are to:

- promote archaeological research within New Mexico and disseminate knowledge arising from that research
- promote awareness of New Mexico's cultural resources among public agencies, corporations, and members of the public.
- encourage the legal protection of cultural resources, and encourage high standards for professional archaeology

## **2024 NMAC Contacts**

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